

Transcendence Through Evolution & The Humanistic Savior

Normally, people stand on concepts taking them to be reality. People basically stand on the concept of existence, taking it to be real. When one has seen that the subject and object are only mental constructs, the reality of existence ceases. It is the cessation of both subject and object through insight. One begins to see that existence is only a mental construct, created through the process of perception and conception. In other words, **existence is only an experience. Experience is the basis of existence.** This means **experience precedes existence**, and **existence is a product of experience.** When one realizes this, **one stops standing on existence**, and begins to **stand on the experience**, which is **the basis of existence.** This is “**under-standing**” (*paññā*).

In other words, this is “**awakening**” from the “**dream of existence**” into an **extraordinary** or **transcendent** reality (*pariññā*), though not a transcendental or **Metaphysical Reality.**

As one’s **awareness of the reaction** develops to a high level, and one begins to become aware of the **perceptual process**; when one begins to see that there is **no real person** thinking or doing anything here; when even the reality of the object perceived ceases to be real, then there is **only a process of activity** going on due to the presence of the necessary conditions. When the **conditions cease**, the **activity ceases.** With this realization, the “**sense of self**” **disappears**, and then the emotional reaction has no meaning. Therefore, this realization stops all emotional reactions and maintains the **perfect calmness and tranquillity** which is called NIRVANA, the **imperturbable serenity of mind.**

At this level a person has transcended the normal human level and has reached a **supernormal level.** This supernormal level is only a **tranquillity** of the citta and a **transformation of the cognitive mano**, which is called “**awakening from the dream of existence**,” which may also be described as “**experiencing an impersonal experience.**”

This means, one **does not personalize the experience** thinking, “this experience is mine,” or “I am experiencing,” nor does one identify the body as, “this is me” or “this is my self.” Of course, a normal person could mistake this to be an abnormality, or even insanity, but it is a **supernormal state** that is **free from all suffering**, even **death.**

Transcendence through Evolution

This awakening from the dream of existence is a **transcendence** of the normal consciousness to a **supernormal** level, which is **extremely rare** in the world. It is seen as an evolutionary level of the human consciousness. The human consciousness, obviously, must evolve to a higher level someday. The normal human being is not at the highest evolutionary level. This is why there is so much crime, terrorism, war and mental sickness prevalent in the world today. The Buddhists believed that individuals do evolve beyond this level from time to time, and it had occurred in the past. Buddhists believe that the teaching of the Buddha is a description of the path of evolution of the human being. They also believe that the Buddha represents that fully evolved state, and his perfected disciples were also fully evolved individuals. They were those who had **transcended the normal consciousness**.

Buddhists also believe that it is this transcendence that all religions describe as **union with God**. Buddhists call it **awakening from the dream of existence**. The normal consciousness is aware of a “self that exists” in a “world that exists.” The **Supernormal Consciousness** is aware of the **mental process of perception and conception** that creates this “world” and the “self.” By becoming aware of the process of perception and conception, the **reality** of the “world” and the “self” is lost. This is the **awakening from the dream of existence**. Just as a **magician looking at a magic show** sees **no magic** in it, the **one who has awakened** from the dream of existence **sees that nothing really exists**, either **subjective or objective**. This is **not a fact unknown** to modern psychologists and philosophers, but they **do not normally take it seriously** into their **everyday life**, because the **normal human being**, although quite rational, is **dominated by emotions**, which are **blind**.

This **transcendence** of the normal human consciousness can be viewed as the **culmination** of the **evolutionary process**, spoken of by **Charles Darwin**. He pointed out that **evolution** takes place because of a “**struggle for existence**.” He spoke of a “survival of the fittest,” but in reality, **no individual survived**, only the **species continued** through reproduction. **Every molecule** that was formed had to **break down**, because it was **dependent on necessary conditions**. What is dependent on conditions is **unstable**. It was the **energy** released by this breaking down that was used to **build new ones**. So, the **struggle continues** but **no individual survives**.

This means, only a **struggle to exist continues** but no individual continues to exist. In other words, **this struggle is a failure**. The **continuity** of this **futile struggle** is only a **continuity of suffering**. Every **atom**, every **molecule**, every **thought** and every **emotion** is in a **continuous process of coming and going**. **Existence** is a **static concept**, but **life** is a **dynamic process of change**, like the water in a river that is changing all the time. It is not the same river that one sees the next moment. This is why **Heraclitus** of Ephesus said: “**one cannot enter the same river twice.**” In a similar way, the **baby** that is born is not the **girl or boy** that gets **married**; similarly the **old** person that **dies** is not the **girl or boy** who got **married**.

A **person** or individual is **not a static entity** but a **dynamic process of change** like a wave in the ocean. **Does a wave really exist?** Does a changing process really exist? Is it only when the change is found to be slow that we tend to form **the static concept – existence?** If **so**, do we, **you** and **I**, really **exist?** “**Existence is an illusion,**” or more appropriately a “**delusion.**” If we can **accept this**, we will **be immortal**, because if we **do not exist**, how **can we grow old or die?** “**Immortality**” is “**not a being,**” but an “**absence.**” Therefore, **immortality is not eternal life**. It is **freedom** from the “**delusion of existence.**” This is the **immortality** shown by the Buddha, which can be **gained** through the **evolution of consciousness**. When the human consciousness has **evolved**, to the level where this truth has been **fully comprehended**, but in the **absence** of interfering **blind emotions**, the **struggle** for existence **stops**. This is why **Buddhist meditation** is of **two types**: first is **freeing the mind of emotions** (*samatha*), and then in **developing the thinking faculty** to realize **absence** (*suññathā*). This is **insight** (*vipassanā*).

This process called **life**, which **started as** an unusual **self-replicating molecule** that was able to absorb atoms from its surroundings and create molecules of its own kind, made a **terrible mistake** quite **unconsciously**. When, through the evolutionary process, the **human animal became conscious**, and able to think rationally, unhindered by emotions, he **became aware of the mistake** of struggling to exist. He realized that it was only a **struggle to become permanent** in an **impermanent world**. It was a **futile struggle** where **only disappointment and frustration** persisted. Becoming aware of this fact, the **wise human animal stops the futile struggle**, and thereby stops not only the **process of evolution** itself, but also **all sufferings** connected with **illusory existence**.

The Humanistic Savior

This is why the Buddhist does not think, “the savior of the world is the Creator of the world.” The **Creator cannot be a saviour** because he is the **Creator of suffering**. The true saviour can only be a **human being** who can **free himself** from this suffering by **transcending the normal human consciousness**, of an **existing self**, which is dreaming of a “self” that **exists in a world that does not allow existence**.” This **saviour awakens** from this “dream of existence,” and **then teaches others** to awaken from this **terrible nightmare**, “the **dream of life and death**.” The **all knowing, all-powerful, all-good “God”** is **not an unknown Creator**, but a **known human being** who **transcends** all human weaknesses. Such an individual is the **Buddha**, and he is therefore the **true God of the Buddhists**. He is therefore called “**God-become**” (*brahma bhuto*).

This description of the Buddha helps one understand that **Buddhism is neither theistic nor atheistic. It is humanistic** because this concept of God is a humanistic concept of God. It recognises the **potential divinity of the human being**. It is through the **process of evolution** that the **human being evolves to the level of God**. This is **not a deification** of a human being, but the **description of the gradual evolution** of the human being, and thus **transcending all human weaknesses, to reach a super-human divine state of perfection**. This is the **humanistic way of union with God**, which all religions speak of in their own way. **God** is understood in Buddhist thinking, to be only the **human ideal of perfection**. **God** is the **ideal of perfection** that **human beings conceive, and struggle to realize** through the **practice of religion**. When a **human being does realize** this **ideal**, they are called an **Awake One, a Buddha**. When this occurs, the **process of evolution stops**, because the **futile struggle to exist stops**, and one has “**awakened**” from the “**dream of existence**.” The **essence** of this “**God**” is **not “existence,”** as in the case of the theistic God; the **essence** of this God is “**non-existence**.” This **God** has **ceased to exist**, even when others see him as a **living existing** person. Buddha is the **anthropomorphic God** of the Buddhist, or rather the **Theo-psychic Man**.